

# Emergency Responder

WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION



WASHINGTON MILITARY DEPARTMENT

January-February 2001

## Regional energy issues receive scrutiny

The Pacific Northwest's energy problem will be a long term event lasting at least two or three years, according to regional power system managers.

That was the assessment received by Washington Emergency Management Division staff and local emergency managers Feb. 12 from representatives of Bonneville Power Administration, the Energy Section of the Washington Trade and Economic Development Office, Puget Sound Energy, Seattle City Light and Tacoma Public Power.

Energy system managers also said other emergency situations such as floods and fires will worsen the power problem; emergency managers cannot be guaranteed advance notice of widespread power outages; and public education has an important role in helping the public cope with the problem.

Vickie VanZandt, vice president, transmission operations and planning for the Bonneville Power Administration, said growth combined with the lack of new electrical transmission lines and generation construction, and regulatory and statutory changes have transformed a stable, regional electrical system into a less predictable system based on more short term contracts in a highly competitive electrical supply market.

In a lot of circumstances today, she said there is no backup margin of power supply available to utilities to meet electrical demands. The growing electrical demand in the region and in the West as a



Ed Reed, program manager with Pierce County Department of Emergency Management, and Vicki VanZandt, vice president, transmission operations and planning for the Bonneville Power Administration, discuss utility plans for possible rolling blackouts in the event of energy shortages. (EMD photo by Rob Harper)

## Puget Sound tsunami and landslide hazards studied

A two-day workshop at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory revealed a new natural hazard to inner Puget Sound: the tsunami.

The conference's computer modeling introduced the tsunami risk to Puget Sound, explained George Crawford, earthquake program manager in the State Emergency Management Division's Programs and Recovery unit. We weren't sure before, but now the modeling supports it.

Computer modeling, based on a map of the Seattle fault that runs from Kitsap County underneath Seattle to Bellevue, showed how a tsunami would be generated from a tremor similar to one that struck about 1,000 years ago on the Seattle fault.

The computer model depicted a sudden thrust upward on the fault's southern side and a drop on its northern side, producing a 15-20 foot wall of water heading mostly south on Puget Sound. The tsunami strikes Seattle's Elliot Bay, including the industrial area along the Duwamish River, and rushes on to hit Tacoma's Commencement Bay a half hour later.

Developers of the model were Shunichi Koshimura, a Japanese postdoctoral researcher on loan to NOAA, and Hal Molfjeld, a senior scientist at NOAA.

Workshop data also pointed out that more than half of the King County shoreline is unstable and susceptible to landslides resulting from earthquakes as well as from heavy rainfall runoff. This landslide vulnerability highlights the need for cities and counties to prepare data bases to direct planning and development over the long term, according to Eric Holdeman, manager, King

*Continued on p. 3*

*Continued on p. 2*

## 19 counties eligible for FSA loans

Nineteen Washington counties were declared eligible Feb. 8 for Farm Service Agency (FSA) emergency loans because of losses caused last year by drought, freezing weather and wildfires.

The eligible counties are Ferry, Franklin, Grant, Klickitat, Okanogan, Walla Walla, Adams, Benton, Chelan, Columbia, Douglas, Kittitas, Lincoln, Skagit, Skamania, Stevens, Whatcom, Whitman, and Yakima counties. Gov. Gary Locke requested the farm disaster declaration last November.

This designation makes all qualified family-sized farm operators in these counties eligible for low-interest emergency loans from FSA. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available, repayment ability, and other eligibility requirements. The loan applications deadline is eight months from the date of declaration.

FSA has a variety of other programs available, in addition to the emergency loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity. Interested farmers may contact their local FSA offices for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures. Additional information is also available online at: <<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/disaster/assistance1.htm>>

## Tsunamis, landslides studied in Puget Sound

*Continued from page 1*

County Office of Emergency Management.

With the new tsunami hazard awareness, several new partnerships have formed to address mitigating damage from Puget Sound earthquakes and tsunamis, said Crawford.

He said the workshop also highlighted the need to share information to improve hazard mapping and local zoning ordinances and to combine the information and work being conducted by numerous researchers.

## 2001 Washington Legislature has busy agenda

A variety of emergency management related bills are under scrutiny during the 2001 Legislative Regular Session that began Jan. 8 and will run through April 22, 2001. The following is a rundown on these bills

### Budget

Bill numbers are as follows: Operating, HB 1315/SB 5345; Supplemental Operating, HB 1314/SB 5346; Capital Budget, HB 1359/SB 5347; Supplemental Capital, HB 1625.

### Public Records

HB 1187/SB 5351/SB 5255 would exempt records containing specific and unique vulnerability assessments or response plans intended to prevent or mitigate criminal acts of terrorism, the public release of which has a substantial likelihood of threatening public safety. These bills are currently in House State Government and Senate Judiciary committees.

### School safety

SB 5285 and 5543 relate to school safety. These bills are similar and provide technical assistance to create a comprehensive approach to school districts emergency management planning, prevention and training. There may be a new bill introduced. Other bills relating to school safety include HB 1444, 1485, 1818, 1838, 1939, 2137 and SB 5528 and 5979.

### Sales tax exemption

HB 1018 and SB 5157 would continue until July 1, 2003, to exempt certain labor and service charges for moving or demolishing houses or cleaning up debris in an area declared as a federal landslide disaster area (Kelso). The removal program has encountered delays as the result of asbestos abatement.

### Volunteers

HB 1643 would add a new section to chapter 4.24 RCW regarding volunteers of a nonprofit organization or government entity to not be personally liable and defines what is and is not covered. The bill would cover the volunteers only if the nonprofit organization carried public liability insurance. HB 1856 would allow excused student absences for authorized search and rescue activities.

### EMAC

SB 5256 would enact the Emergency Management Assistance Compact that was approved by Congress (PL 104-321) in 1996. Currently, 35 states and 2 territories are signatory to this compact that provides mutual aid and standardized procedures for use in an emergency or for training.

### Amateur radio antennas

SB 5002 would allow antennas to 75 feet to obtain frequency bands. Federal rules do not specify height. Many public and private emergency organizations rely upon the professional, dedicated, and expert levels of service provided by the amateur radio community.

### E911

HB 1181 and SSB 5335 would remove the restrictions on the use of the statewide E911 tax concerning salaries; provide for potential efficiencies through statewide acquisition of E911 services and establish legislative priorities for the use of the account funds. The bill is the result of extensive work with the E911 Advisory Committee and strategic planning. SB 6034 and HB 2150 would provide a new excise tax for the costs of implementing and maintaining a wireless 911 system and program.

Additional information also is available on the Washington State Legislature's website at <http://www.leg.wa.gov>. The fiscal impacts of certain bills are posted at <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/fns>.

For more information on emergency management legislation, contact Joan Sterling, EMD's legislative and policy analyst, at (253) 512-7007 or [j.sterling@emd.wa.gov](mailto:j.sterling@emd.wa.gov).

## Regional utilities outline energy problems to emergency managers

*Continued from p. 1*

whole is driving the electrical distribution system harder, she said.

One result is that events that happen elsewhere in the West (outside of the Pacific Northwest) can impact our electrical system, she said. One example was the sudden loss of 30,000 megawatts in 1996 that resulted in blackouts from California to Idaho.

Other problems are that the transmission system is old and new construction has not kept pace with demand, she said. Since 1987, there has been no major Northwest transmission line construction since 1987 while system use has grown by 1.3 percent a year.

Systems are on the edge. It will be some time before it changes, said VanZandt. She said solutions to the electrical supply problem include:

- construction of new transmission lines;
- siting of new generating plants near areas where electrical load is high or transmission line capacity exists;
- emphasizing energy conservation efforts and renewable energy resources.

But there is no quick fix, she said, nothing that under current state and federal regulation it takes two to five years to plan, site, and build a major transmission line. VanZandt said that 2003 and 2005 are the earliest completion dates for any new transmission line construction projects.

VanZandt and other utility representatives described two types of possible blackout scenarios.

**1. The first scenario** is most likely a winter situation. Low temperatures have driven up demand. One of Washington's eight electrical control zones (These zones are BPA, Seattle City Light, Tacoma Public Power, Puget Sound Energy, Pacific Corp., Chelan PUD, Grant PUD and Avista) has a demand that will exceed its safety reserves. It cannot

bring in power so it drops load. In this scenario, power would be cut for up to 15 to 20 minutes and then restored. Rolling blackouts or shutdown would rotate from area to area until power supply and loads stabilized. The blackouts would be no more than 15 to 20 minutes to avoid spikes in demand at restart such as thermostats triggering heating in cold buildings and hot water heaters. Utility representatives said this type of event would allow public notice or warning because the National Weather Service could predict weather events such as a cold wave.

**2. The second scenario** is most likely a summer event. A heat wave in California drives up electrical demand, but there is a failure in the transmission line system, triggering a cascading loss of power all at once across the region. This failure also could be triggered by an event such as a wildfire that forces a shut down of major transmission lines. A blackout in this situation could be as long as 90 minutes to two hours. Full recovery of the electrical system might be as long as four days. This event would occur without public notice or warning.

Utility representatives acknowledged the importance of including public safety considerations in power blackout plans.

VanZandt said BPA is still looking at how to support critical infrastructure in its blackout planning. Ralph Underwood of Seattle City Light has worked with emergency managers and customers to identify critical public safety facilities such as 911 centers and hospitals. Dave Magnuson of Puget Sound Energy said the utility also was trying to identify and prioritize such critical service facilities as police and fire stations and Auburn's Federal Aviation Agency center.

In a roundtable discussion after the briefing, Betty Schultz, Thurston County emergency management coordinator, said the briefing

pointed out the region is likely to have electrical blackouts.

Local emergency managers need to be involved with their local utilities about blackout plans and must emphasize to officials and the public about the need for emergency preparedness measures, she said.

**"Systems are on the edge. It will be some time before it changes"**

*V icki VanZandt, BPA*

Jim Schoonover, EMD operations unit manager, said the briefing pointed out that public agencies and utilities need to have public education messages to address both winter and summer outage situations.

Julie Palakovich, of the Washington State Energy Office in STED, emphasized that the local emergency managers can assist in the public information effort by contacting their local energy providers and having them put conservation messages and response to outages messages in the providers newsletters.

Briefing participants agreed that other events, such as cold spells, floods, drought, fires, seismic activity, volcano eruptions could cause energy disruptions as a by-product of the event and strain on the electrical distribution grid. Consequently, emergency managers should include electrical disruptions on their emergency response plan checklists for all hazards.

### Seaton services held

Services were held Jan. 26 for Keith Seaton, a well-known Clark County Regional Communications Agency (CRCA) volunteer, who died Jan. 22. Seaton had been a volunteer with the American Red Cross, Citizen Emergency Response Team, RACES and Evergreen Search Dogs.



## WWEN conference set for April 17-18 in Bellevue

Energy problems, business continuity plans for emergencies, and school safety are among the presentation topics at the Partnerships in Emergency Preparedness Conference April 17-18 at Bellevue's DoubleTree Hotel.

Featured speakers include Janet Mebust, business continuity manager of Toyota Motor Sales USA, and Larry Hamilton, director, National Office of Fire & Aviation at the National Interagency Fire Center.

Breakout sessions will include a panel discussion on the region's current energy problems, an earthquake tabletop exercise, and presentations on tsunami hazard mitigation and the BP Amoco/Olympic pipeline.

The Washington State Emergency Management Association (WSEMA) will meet on April 16.

Through March 1, conference registration is \$175 on-line at <http://hrs.crgnet.com/wwen2001/> and \$200 by mail. Registration fees rise to \$225 on-line and \$250 by mail from March 2 to March 30; After March 30, the registration fees is \$325 on line and \$350 by mail.

Conference sponsors are Western Washington Emergency Network, WSEMA and Washington Emergency Management Division. For information, call Columbia Resource Group at (206) 441-6448.

## Training opportunities

Training openings for March, April and May are:

- G242 Effective Communications, Everett, March 20-22.
- G244 Developing Volunteer Resources, Everett, March 23.
- HAZUS, Bates College-Tacoma, March 27-28.
- G250.3 Disaster-Related Needs of Seniors/Disability, Kennewick, April 10.
- G362.1 Multi-Hazard Safety Program for School Workshop, Pasco, April 11.
- G120/130 Exercise Design & Evaluation. Wenatchee, April 24-27.
- / Disaster Recovery, Camp Murray, May 7-8; Moses Lake, May 9-10.

## E911 rule adoption slated

EMD's E911 Unit plans to adopt on April 1 a new Washington Administrative Code regulation authorizing local fire authorities to enforce the law dealing with the identification of a caller's location when 9-1-1 is dialed through a private branch exchange. The change primarily impacts multi-unit apartments. There was no opposition to the proposed rule at January's public hearing.

## Personnel

**Sidse Nielsen** joined the Recovery Section of EMD's Programs and Recovery Unit Feb. 16 as its Secretary Senior. She comes to EMD from the Department of Corrections.

## Fox receives gubernatorial commendation

Daniel T. Fox, EMD duty officer, received a gubernatorial certificate of commendation in January for his successful efforts last November to save a man who was choking on food at a Hermiston, Ore. restaurant.

## EMD service honors

Three EMD employees have received awards for service totaling 20 years with the state. Those honored were:

- Christi Moores, Programs and Recovery Unit, 10 years.
- Dave Irwin, 911 Unit, 5 years.
- Mark Kogle, Plans, Exercise, Education, Training Unit, 5 years.

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